L. KÁKOSY

NEW STUDIES IN MAGICAL HEALING STATUES

(Preliminary Report)

The healing statues, the so-scalled "statues guérisseuses", made their first appearance at a late stage of development of Egyptian religion. The first example dates from the twentieth Dyn. and represents Ramesses III seated on a throne together with a badly damaged female figure, probably a queen.[1] The throne is covered with spells against snakes and scrorpions. The statue was erected in the eastern desert, not far from Heliopolis, in a chapel called "the place of watching *(st. gmḥ)*". It was expected to protect those who passed through this district, especially members of the army.[2] As a mythical prefiguration of and parallel to the actual danger, the serpent is identified with the enemies of Horus in one of the spells,[3] Although some of the texts recur in the later magical literature, e.g. in a magical papyrus of the Brooklyn Museum[4] and in the well-known Pap. Bremner-Rhind[5], this statue still gives the impression of being a rather unusual nomument of Egyptian magic. While its purpose is similar to that of a series of later statues, there is a considerable difference between the incantations used here and the compendia of spells brought on later statues. The statue of Ramesses III is decidedly much more of a prophylactic than of a healing character.[6] It was regarded as an amulet ensuring safety against poisonous and dangerous animals. Its protective power was inherent in the spells and in the divine King identified here with Re and Kheperi.[7] An image of the latter, a scarab, was placed on the King's head. Horus is addressed in these texts but he is not yet given that central role so characteristic of the later statues, which usually hold a "Horus-on-the-crocodiles" stela in their hand.

The magical statues and the small stelas of Horus belong to the same domain of magic. As magical statues they are united in one composition and, if separate objects they bear the same texts. Consequently, the history of the two groups cannot be seen separately.

The exact date of the appearance of the cippi of Horus cannot be established. Undoubtedly, they were closely related, both in their composition and purpose, to the stelas depicting the god Shed. He is shown as rendering scorpions harmless. Curiously enough, such stelas were kept

in the houses in Akhet-Aton,[8] a proof for their popularity. The name was interpreted as "The Saviour" and it was still retained in the text of the late Horus-cippi. Djedḥer was given the epithet Shed. The gradual identification of Shed with Horus is illustrated on a wooden tablet, probably from the end of the New Kingdom. On the obverse the youthful Shed is depicted as a god triumphing over dangerous animals; the reverse shows Onuris and a falcon-god with a double crown. He is standing on the back of an oryx.[9]

Besides Shed and Horus, it was Amun who was regarded as an enemy of crocodiles. There is an instruction in the Magical Pap. Harris stating that the spell should be recited over the picture of Amun with four heads with crocodiles placed under his feet.[10] Amun did not prevail in this role later, although he remained related with the subject-matter of magic and his figure was often depicted on the breast and other parts of magical statues.

Between the figure representing Ramesses III and the late group there is a wide gap in the available evidence, but this lacuna is filled by the cippi of Horus, some of which can be dated with certainty to the reign of Dyn. XXII–XXVI.[11]

After a long interval, the magical statues reappear about the middle of the first millenium BC.[12] Statues of a certain date come from the fourth cent., some pieces can be, nevertheless, of an earlier origin. Growing interest in magical protection is well illustrated by the Metternich-stela and the healing statue of Djedḥer. Both of them are provided with a King's name. On the Metterhich-stela it is the Nakhthorhebit (Nectanebos II) name engraved on both sides of the top; the statue of Djedḥer bears the cartouche of Philippos Arrhidaios. Obviously, the fourth cent. constitutes an important chapter in the history of Egyptian magic. There is another magical statue in Cairo[13] which shows the cartouche of Nectanebos II. This king becomes a great magician and specialist of astrology in the later tradition. In the first part of the Romance of Alexander he appears as a central figure and succesfully seduces the wife of Philippos II, king of Macedonia. There is little doubt that Nectanebos was really interested in magical practices. We should mention, in passing, two more magical papyri written again in the fourth cent: they are Pap. Brit. Mus. 10081[14] and Pap. Bremner-Rhind.

The magical statues fit in well with this period, when magic acquired a stronger hold on priestly religion and the popular mind alike. In contrast to the Horus-stelas which were used privately as amulets, these statues were set up in public places and were accessible to everybody looking for the help of the mysterious force residing in the inscriptions. The way how these statues and cippi were thought to transfer their power to the patient, is well known: water was poured on them, and as it flowed over the inscriptions, it absorbed their power and became a potent drug against scorpion stings and snakebites. On the basis of the statue of Djedḥer a basin was hollowed out to collect the healing water.

The extremely long inscriptions represent a rich source for the study of Late-Egyptian magic. In comparing the statues the texts display a degree of monotony and uniformity. Obviously, the sculptors worked from

pattern-books and collections of charms and they chose mostly the same incantations. They have had instructions as to the arrangement of the texts on the statues as well. This is shown by the fact that some tests recur on several statues in the same place of the the body. Numerous formulae are identical with those known from the Metternich-stela and the Horus-cippi.

In spite of the stereotyped elements of these statues one can find numerous individual features in the texts and the figures of the gods as well. As the first example I quote one of the unpublished statues in Turin. On the breast not far from the heart, there is an instruction: "(The spell) should be recited over an ibis drawn in black (?) paint on the heart of anybody who is suffering. He will recover immediately." (Turin suppl. 9). This passage is a welcome supplement to what we know about the use of the statues.

The priest who ordered the statue 1788 in Florence to be made, speaks of himself in the inscriprion on the back: "I know who is under my finger (i.e. the patient), and I heal the disease... I am whose name will be protected in Chemmis *(ỉḫ bjt)*." He was a medical man and a magician at the same time and, as the text makes it clear, his main method of treatment consisted in reciting incantations.

The front part of the statue in Naples is provided with a long text to strengthen the heart of the patient. They knew, of course, that the poison often caused, a heart-failure. Interestingly, in the text the heart is identified with the *nṯr* (cat-fish) and is said to be the superior of every *nṯr*-fish.

An especially effective heal-giving power was attributed to the hand of the statues, called the "hand of Atum". The hand of the androgynous creator which played an important part in the birth of Shu and Tefnut in the Heliopolitan cosmogony, was made later in a divine entity and was regarded as the female counterpart of Atum.[15] High-ranking priestesses ("wifes of God") and a number of goddesses were given the title "the hand of God".

It is the magical aspect which represents the most characteristic feature of the inscriptions, but it does not fully exhaust their content. Sometimes they give information about the person who dedicated them or about the one in whose honour they were erected. An extended autobiographical section was inscribed on the statue of Djedḥer. Although it does not give an account of Djedḥer's career, it throws a revealing light on the situation in the temple of Athribis in the years of the second Persian invasion. He caused the sacred falcons, who were left unburied because of the troubles of the war, to be embalmed. The embalming was carried out with *mr.t*-oil. He built an embalming-house for the sacred birds and constructed a well of stone.

Djedḥer belonged to the temple-personnel of two falcon-gods, Horus Khenty-ḥety and the god named The Falcon *(p; Bjk)*. He served them as a Chief Doorkeeper and Chief Guardian respectively. He did not have an explicitly priestly office in the temple but his duties were closely connected with those of the priests. His statue was dedicated by a priest named Waḥibre who must have been well-versed in magical literature. He collected

the texts from a Bau Re, probably a compendium of spells against dangerous animals.[16]

The statue of Djedher (Cairo Museum) was set up somewhere in the city of Athribis, probably in the temple area, certainly on a place accessible to the inhabitants. Another statue of him was erected in the necropolis. The inscriptions of the base, now in the Oriental Inst. Mus. in Chicago have been recently discussed by Elizabeth J. Sherman.[17] This basis may have belonged to a damaged statue – other than the "saviour statue" – in Cairo.[18]

Djedher is called "saviour" only on statue JE 46431. His help was inteded for the living and dead alike. Spells against snakes appear in the funerary literature as early as in the Pyramid Texts. Therefore, the deceased also had the privilege to enjoy the presence of the deified man. The high-priest of Ptah, Sheshonq, wanted to ensure his safety in the netherworld by a Horus-stela put in his tomb.[19]

The statue JE 41677 in Cairo found at Tell Basta represents a certain Ankh-Hap who bears the archaic title *sdȝw* (?) *bjty* "the seal-bearer of the King of Lower-Egypt".[20] What duties this function entailed at that time, cannot be established, one can probably assume that he was one of the dignitaries linked to the personnel of the temple in Bubastis.

A magical statue in Florence (1788) was a portrait of a priest of Khenty-heti. Here we have again a link with Athribis.

If we sum up the evidence relating to the persons represented in the form of magical statues, we are led to the conclusion that these statues must have had strong links with the religious centres in northern Egypt, especially Athribis and Bubastis. The same conclusion presents itself if we consider the mythological allusions and the illustrations of the texts. It should be added that on the so-called Tyszkiewicz statue three priests of Bastet are named.[21]

This does not preclude a use of magical statues in Thebes. As I was kindly informed by Cl. Traunecker, a chapel with magical texts was found in the temple of Mut in Karnak. A magical statue or a stela with magical texts was placed there. (Published recently in JARCE 20).

The cippi of Horus, on the other hand, were used in wide areas of Egypt. A stela of considerable size was made for a famous personality in the high clergy of Thebes, Djedkhonsuiufankh, the fourth prophet of Amun (Turin, unpublished). The basis of this stela displays a collection of spells, rather different from those usually brought on such pieces.

Theban gods were often depicted in the illustrations carved on the statues, but they did not have a major influence on the texts. An unusual passage deserves mentioning in this context. On the inscription of the Naples-statue the Ogdoad of Djeme in named.

An analysis of the illustrations is beyond the scope of this paper. In studying them one gets the impression that those who made the statues and the Horus-stelas intended to allude to an esoteric theology not included in the spells. The strangely compounded shapes of pantheistic deities take on the attributes of several gods and they express the concentration of divine power. The speculative symbolism serves as a means of expression

through which the priests recorded complex theological doctrines in a concise form. On the Horus-stela held by the magical statue in the Louvre, the deeper meaning is alluded to by the presence of the two abstract divinities, Hu and Sia.[22]

Information as to the requirements to the consecration of such statues is rather scanty. The inscriptions suggest that it was not a privilege of priests, though the persons represented had close links with the temples. Undoubtedly, it was regarded as a special distinction and favour to be portrayed as a statue inscribed with healing texts. Statues of this kind must have attracted crowds of visitors whether interested in curiosities or suffering from ailments. The person whose name was inscribed on a magical statue had good reason to hope that his memory will survive for a long time. The right of the erection of such statues was probably reserved for the King in the New Kingdom, and its transfer to the temples may have taken place first in the Late Period.

While magical statues survived in a limited number, the Horus-stelas were certainly produced in large quantities. Nevertheless, it was not a case of mass-production, since each one of them displays unique features and details. Their wide-ranging popularity spread even to the foreigners living in Egypt in the Late Period. A stela found in Memphis was made for a Phoenician.[23] Likewise, they were known to the inhabitants of Alexandria. This is shown by the fact that not only the Metternich-stela was found there but also another smaller cippus is of the same provenance.[24]

A remarkable find should be mentioned from Tanis, again a city of international character. In a house destroyed in the second cent. AD. a number of papyri written in Greek, hieratic and demotic were found. Also a fragment of a Horus-stela was part of this find. The owner must have been a man of high education, versed in Greek and Egyptian as well.[25]

There was a demand for such mysterious objects, both magical stelas and statues even outside Egypt. A basis of a magical statue was found during the excavations in Byblos.[26] Another fragment of a magical statue was discovered in Ostia.[27] A stela of Horus from the Esquilinus hill in Pome testifies to the currency of such objects as late as the first half of the fourth cent. AD.[28] A fragmentary magical statue in Turin originates in Rome. Since it is mentioned already by Athanasius Kircher (Oedipus Aegyptiacus), it must have been discovered in or earlier than the seventeenth cent.[29]

Even though the texts were not understood outside Egypt – though a few priests of Isis may have had some vague idea of their content –, the graphic scene on the stelas gave the necessary information as to their purpose.

To conclude this article, I wish to refer to the appearance of the central, motif of the Horus-cippi in Christian context. The pictures representing Christ as triumphing over dangerous animals originate directly in psalm 91,93 ("Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet"). In Egypt, however, an additional influence of the Horus-stelas can be assumed.

[1] *E. Drioton:* ASAE 39 (1939) 57 ff.
[2] *ibid.*, 73.
[3] *ibid.*
[4] *J.–C. Goyon:* JEA 57 (1971) 154 ff.
[5] *R. O. Faulkner:* BAE III, Bruxelles 1933, 58 f (XXVI, 12–20).
[6] *Drioton:* op. cit. 87.
[7] *ibid.* 77.
[8] *T. E. Peet–C. L. Woolley:* The city of Akhenaten I, London 1923, 96 f.
[9] *G. Daressy:* Textes et dessins magiques, Le Caire 1903, pl. X (CG 9427).
[10] *H. O. Lange:* Der magische Papyrus Harris, Kopenhagen 1927, 51 (VI, 8). Cf. Pap. Chester Beatty IV rto VIII, 3 ff. (*A. H. Gardiner:* Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Third Series, London 1935, II pl. 15.)
[11] Brooklyn Mus. 57. 21.2 *H. Jacquet-Gordon:* The Brooklyn Museum Annual 7 (1965–1966) 53 ff, esp. 54, 57 f, fig. 3–4 (one of the Osorkon kings).
Cippus of Sheshonq, high priest of Memphis, son of Osorkon II: *A. Badawy:* ASAE 54 (1956) p. 177, pl. XV.
Cippus between 730–633 BC: *K. Seele:* JNES 6 (1947) 43 ff.
[12] The most important recent studies are as follows: *H. Altenmüller:* OMRO 46 (1965) 10 ff (Statue in Vienna); *A. Klasens:* A Magical Statue Base (Socle Behague) in the Museum of Antiquities at Leiden. OMRO 33 (1952); *E. Jelinková-Reymond:* Les inscriptions de la statue guérisseuse de Djed-Her-le-Sauveur, BdE 23, Le Caire 1956.
[13] *G. Daressy:* ASAE 11 (1911) 187 ff.
[14] *S. Schott:* ZÄS 65 (1930) 35 ff.
[15] LÄ II 813 ff. (Gotteshand, *J. Leclant*).
[16] *Jelinková-Reymond:* op. cit. 132 f.
[17] JEA 67 (1981) 82 ff.
[18] *P. Vernus:* Athribis, BdE 74, Le Caire 1978, doc. 161.
[19] *A. Badawy:* ASAE 54 (1956), p. 177, pl. XV.
[20] *G. Daressy:* ASAE 11 (1911) 187 ff.
[21] *G. Lefebvre:* BIFAO 30 (1931) 95 f.
[22] *C. Aldred–Fr. Daumas–Chr. Desroches-Noblecourt–J. Leclant:* L'Egypte de crépuscule, Paris 1980, fig. 206. For the statue see also *G. Lefebvre:* BIFAO 30 (1931) 89 ff.
[23] *G. Daressy:* Textes, 3 ff.
[24] ibid. pl. I, PM IV 6.
[25] *W. M. Fl. Petrie:* Tanis I, London 1885, 41 ff, *B. H. Stricker:* OMRO 25 (1942) 52.
[26] *P. Montet:* Byblos et l'Egypte, Paris 1928–1929 I. 249 ff, II. pl. CLII.
[27] *S. Donadoni:* Studi Rosellini II, Pisa 1955, 59 ff.
[28] *W. F. Bissing:* Egyptian Religion II (1934 nr. 4) 140 ff.
[29] *A. Roullet:* The Egyptian and Egyptianizing Monuments of Imperial Rome, ÉPRO 20, Leiden 1972 121 nr. 226.